

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is Israel's recently approved military plan for Gaza?

Israel's Security Cabinet recently approved a new military strategy for the Gaza Strip titled "Gideon's Chariots" (Merkavot Gideon). According to the plan, which has sparked widespread international outrage, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) would invade Gaza with armored and infantry divisions, gradually occupying and holding most of the territory. This differs from previous operations, which involved entering and then withdrawing. The plan also reportedly includes the intention to flatten all of Gaza if a new hostage and ceasefire deal is not reached soon. The name "Gideon's Chariots" reportedly invokes biblical symbolism of divine vengeance and blends it with the modern Israeli Merkava tanks.

### What are the stated objectives of the "Gideon's Chariots" plan?

Israeli officials state the plan is aimed at "completely defeating Hamas" and securing the release of all remaining Israeli captives. The military chief of staff also suggested the plan would allow for stronger strikes against Hamas. However, some sources suggest the plan's scope indicates a broader agenda of collective punishment and permanent occupation, with critics arguing that the stated goals, particularly the release of hostages, contradict the plan's actions and potential outcomes. Some within the Israeli government openly discuss the permanent occupation and even potential annexation of Gaza.

### How does the "Gideon's Chariots" plan propose to handle the Palestinian population in Gaza?

Under the "Gideon's Chariots" plan, the Palestinian population in Gaza is reportedly to be moved and confined within "sterile zones" or a single "humanitarian zone" in the southern part of the Gaza Strip. This displacement is seen by some as mirroring a strategy of wiping out cities by demolishing residential blocks and incorporating them into Israeli-controlled zones, signaling a slow annexation. Critics and aid agencies express concern that this could contribute to conditions leading to forced permanent displacement or ethnic cleansing.

### What are the key changes in Israel's approach to aid distribution in Gaza under the new plan?

Israel has approved a controversial plan to take over the distribution of humanitarian aid in Gaza, replacing international aid groups with private international companies and

potentially private U.S. military contractors for aid delivery at Israeli-designated "hubs" or "civilian islands." This plan was reportedly developed in coordination with the U.S. The amount of aid allowed into Gaza would be significantly reduced compared to the volume during the previous ceasefire.

## Why are aid agencies criticizing Israel's new aid distribution plan?

Aid agencies have heavily criticized Israel's plan to control aid distribution, stating it violates fundamental humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, independence, and neutrality. They argue the plan appears designed to enhance control over life-sustaining materials as a pressure tactic within a military strategy. Concerns have been raised about the use of private security firms or military contractors at distribution points potentially leading to violence, and the process potentially excluding vulnerable populations or forcing civilians into military zones to collect aid. The plan is also seen as contributing to further forced displacement.

## How has Israel been accused of using humanitarian aid as a weapon?

Several sources accuse Israel of deliberately restricting the amount of food and aid entering Gaza and using humanitarian aid as a weapon and pressure lever against Hamas. Israeli officials, including the Defense Minister, have explicitly stated that blocking aid is a key pressure tactic. This blockage has led to severe shortages, widespread hunger, near-starvation conditions, and the closure of community kitchens, pushing parts of the population into famine conditions. Starving civilians, particularly children, as a weapon of war is described as a clear violation of international law and a war crime.

## What role are armed gangs playing in the humanitarian situation in Gaza, and how is Israel allegedly involved?

Reports indicate that armed gangs have been looting aid convoys, marketplaces, and warehouses in Gaza. Growing evidence suggests that Israel has either encouraged or turned a blind eye to these gangs throughout the conflict. More recent reports claim Israel is actively fomenting and possibly arming these groups to sow chaos and exacerbate famine conditions. Eyewitnesses and local officials suggest a coordinated effort involving Israeli air support and even undercover Israeli operatives directing and supplying weapons to these gangs. Gaza security forces have attempted to counteract these groups, viewing them as collaborators with Israel.

## What is the international reaction to Israel's new plans for Gaza and the humanitarian situation?

The "Gideon's Chariots" plan and Israel's approach to aid distribution have sparked widespread international outrage. Regional powers including Egypt, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia have condemned the plan as a violation of international law and a ceasefire agreement, warning of regional instability. Turkey and Iran have also rejected Palestinian displacement or annexation. Aid agencies and the UN have firmly rejected the aid distribution plan, warning of violations of humanitarian principles and potential war crimes liability for those who assist in its implementation. The Red Cross has appealed to governments to act to end the suffering in Gaza, stating it "questions the very foundations of our humanity." Some critics and media outlets have accused those who prioritize concerns about antisemitism over halting the actions in Gaza of being complicit in genocide.